



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Proposed Budget 2025-2028 Review

Witness: The Minister for Children and Families

Wednesday, 16th October 2024

Panel:

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair)
Connétable M. Labey of Grouville (Vice-Chair)
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South
Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter, The Minister for Children and Families
Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour, Assistant Minister for Children and Families
Mr. R. Sainsbury, Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.
Ms. D. Marriott, Director, Children's Services
Mr. K. Posner, Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.
Ms. A. Homer, Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.

[15:00]

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair):

Welcome to this hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 16th October. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silence. I am Deputy Catherine Curtis, the chair of the panel.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

My name is Connétable Mark Labey, and I am the vice-chair..

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South:

Deputy Porée, panel member.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Deputy Helen Miles, panel member.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Constable Richard Vibert, Minister for Children and Families.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Deputy Malcolm Ferey, Assistant Minister for Children and Families.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Keith Posner, Director for Improvement and Transformation at C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Rob Sainsbury, Chief Officer at C.Y.P.E.S.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Anne Homer, Head of Finance Business Partnering for C.Y.P.E.S.

Director, Children's Services:

Donna Marriott, Director of Children's Services.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you everyone. If I start these questions off. Minister, we note from your letter to us on 6th September that business plans will not be completed until the end of 2024 and published in early 2025 . How do you propose robust scrutiny of these plans if they are not available?

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is a very good question.

Director, Children's Services:

We have got the reform programme, which is obviously being redesigned, so that will build the big plan in terms of financial oversight and the shape of the programme and the 3 work strands that sit underneath it. That is having governance via the programme board that is chaired by Rob Sainsbury, the chief officer.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Maybe we can see some plans before.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, we will. Yes, we are quite happy to share those with you. We can do that, yes. Absolutely.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, that would be really helpful. Can you confirm if the priorities for 2025 will likely be very similar to those of 2024 or tell us any changes?

The Minister for Children and Families:

There are 3 main themes in there: supporting families, loving homes, and care and support. So there are changes, although those are all themes that are with us today. Within families we are looking at multidisciplinary service development, system-wide quality improvement practice model enhancement and, of course, we are back to the therapeutic practice model implementation, which is quite important. Loving homes, we are still developing some of that. But key to that is establishing our estate strategy. Within the Government Plan, of course, in our capital investment plan, the estate strategy is basically to ensure that we have sufficiency and that we have homes that are really designed for the children rather than homes that we have inherited that may not be particularly suitable. We come back to the last meeting where I said that we are looking at existing properties, refurbishing them, and refurbishing them in a way that make them as suitable as possible for the young children. Then we have care and support. We have started redesign of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board, which we covered again, with the subgroups. We have already created that structure. We are working on creating the Children in Care Council and we had put that out with a third party, but we have brought that back in-house because we were ... I suppose I can say we were unhappy with the speed at which it was being developed. Then another key part of that is the care leaver entitlements. I know Donna has done a further review of that package, and I would think that end of the year?

Director, Children's Services:

Due to report back to the Corporate Parenting Board, I think, on 4th December I think it is, the review will be concluded. But young people involved in that and partners.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Is that something we can share with the Scrutiny group before that meeting? Are you happy or do you want to do it after the ...?

Director, Children's Services:

It will come to the board for a decision on whether the board is happy and wants to progress what the recommendations are, so it might be better after the board.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Are you happy with that, after the Corporate Parenting Board have seen it?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think one of the, and it is part of the, I suppose, care leavers' package, was what we were talking before again, which is purpose-built housing for care leavers to bring them ... I think that is really looking at that 21 to 25 group.

Director, Children's Services:

Eighteen to 21, that sort of older group. Then how the 21 to 25s move on to independent accommodation? How we make that a bit more seamless.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I mean, this is close to independent. There is no residential manager, but we would hope that you would have 4 care leavers in one building, but each with their own maisonette that is completely private. They would continue getting support from us to bring them on to totally independent living. Is there a strict age limit on that? If somebody was not ready, we would not send them on, just as we have foster families today who continue with children who are ... well, I certainly know of one of 21 who has recently moved to independent living. We do not say: "You have reached 21, you are out."

The Connétable of Grouville:

You do not kick him out of the door.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So those are the things that are the changes that I immediately, yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

You have mentioned the therapeutic practice, you are looking at homes suitable for children and the Corporate Parenting Board changes and care leavers. You have not mentioned anything about C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Is that because it is like business as usual?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, I mean we have our challenges with increased numbers and shortage of medication, and I think those are our priorities into next year. The shortage of medication shows no sign of improving. In fact, I think it has become actually slightly worse ...

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It remains challenging, yes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

... in the last few months.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is this the A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. That is a worldwide issue. I think C.A.M.H.S. have got challenges that perhaps now is not the time to make any further changes there. I think the changes over the past few years have been very successful. Are you able to say anything more?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

They have. What I would advise the panel though is that we have come to the end of the mental health and well-being strategy that was developed for C.A.M.H.S., that was part of the business case for investment. Next year will be a year of engagement and consultation around the next stage of that, I guess where the direction of travel is for the service. Continuing the benefits of the strategy from before and what do we need to look at going forward in the future as well. I think there will be a particular focus on transition and how we get a seamless pathway into Adult Services. We know that that is something that the panel have been contacted about and it needs to be a priority for the service. But, as the Minister says, it is really around the activity and managing our activity, which remains high, a lot of demand.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I do give them their due that while there are some issues in that transition, they have got young people that they are still looking ... there is, I think, one at the age of 23 that is still under their care.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

There are areas that need looking at but overall there is not a major issue with allowing somebody who is over 18 to continue with C.A.M.H.S.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thanks for that. We note from your letter dated 6th September as well, that the priority for both Ministers is the delivery of the Government's C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) commitments in relation to children, young people and their families, which were to extend nursery and childcare provisions, to provide a nutritious school meal for every child in the States primary schools and to increase the provision of lifelong learning and skills development. Can you advise the panel how you have been involved with these or if they are largely under the control of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I have to say, they are very much under the control of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, but we do liaise very closely. We have a joint Ministerial meeting every Friday. So there is still a strong bond between the 2 departments. So all those areas have been covered, so I have got an awareness of them. I have to be careful of ... there are lines. I do not want to interfere in an area that is no longer mine. But we both welcome each other's input. I think that is very healthy at the moment. A very healthy relationship that allows us to have an overall awareness of each other's portfolios.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Revenue expenditure for the life of the Children and Families plan is shown as £55.9 million for 2025, £55.3 million for 2026, £55.2 million for 2027 and so on. So there is a decrease during the life of the Budget. Do you think these figures are adequate for what you are hoping to achieve?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Keith, do you want to ...?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, and also I will ask Anne and Donna to come in as well. I think what this obviously reflects is the department and the Government's commitment to value for money. Also within those figures it reflects the ambitions around reform as well. So the department has been engaged in looking at rebasing budgets and understanding spend within particularly the Social Care Service, which Donna has been leading, along with Anne. That is then outlining how the reform programme will develop over the next 3 years. I will just pass over probably to Anne and Donna, just to give a bit more clarity there.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So the reducing balance is to do with the savings targets being played out through the Government Plan. The bottom line is likely to change because we have made the split between the 2 departments in a bit of a hurry, and some of the central departments will need a bit of adjustment next year. But the reducing balance that you were talking about is entirely the value-for-money programme. Also one of the original growth plans from 2023 was a growth award of £1.3 million for social worker recruitment and retention that went down to £900,000 in 2024 and settles at £450,000 because there was a package of non-recurrent actions that were taken. So there are new savings targets and then there is the profile of the original 2023 investment that tapers down. That is why the sums go down, those 2 things.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Because I was going to ask what areas will be impacted most by the decrease, but you were saying that is social worker recruitment ... the plan that was put in place.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

There was an injection in 2023 to stabilise the workforce at that time and that is working its way through and has shown great improvement under recent leadership.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So it is solely ... is there anything else that would be impacted by these decreases, do you think?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So that particular piece was a planned one-off ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

And it is going down.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

The savings targets that all departments have are split into 3 main categories. One is around senior posts, which is fairly small in this area. Another is around exiting Liberte House. So we will lose the cost as well as the budget because we will not need the budget. That will have no impact as the services are consolidated in other existing buildings. Then there remains a residual target, which the service will tackle to become generally more efficient so we are in a fairly good position with that.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We are. We would just highlight that there will be no impact on front line positions and the service is still in a position of growth. We would have to look at monitoring an adjustment, but it is also a demographic-driven service. So if there was demographic pressure and that impacted on the budget, then we would obviously need to talk to the Treasurer around that. That is quite a tried and tested model that we have. We obviously cannot refuse to bring children into care. We have to bring them into care. We have to have the funding to be able to do it. We are well-versed in that space.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so that may change.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think there is recognition that we are in that position.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Absolutely.

[15:15]

The Minister for Children and Families:

The unexpected can happen in which we have to have funding in that we could have additional children brought in. I think there is recognition, is there not?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Absolutely.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right. Just one more question on that. Will these figures be adjusted for inflation?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

They have inflation assumption in them in the same way as all other departments. The inflation assumption in 2025 is 1.7 per cent, which was the Fiscal Policy Panel figure. That usually gets adjusted in each annual plan based on generally September R.P.I. (retail price index) but also looked at in the context of Fiscal Policy Panel projections as well. There is always some inflation but it is R.P.I. and our services may experience ... we are not a household, so we may experience different types of inflation. If we have trouble with that, that would be part of ... for example, if we have more children come into the service and we need more money, we would build into that a non-pay element of it. Inflation is difficult. The R.P.I. basket is not an exact match but there is something in there.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. I think that is you now, Helen.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Something that you mentioned before, the Government had to divide the C.Y.P.E.S. portfolio into 2 separate heads of expenditure following the creation of Children and Families and the Education and Lifelong Learning bits. Can you tell us whether that split has been fairly straightforward? Or alternatively advise us where the areas of crossover are with the Budget lines.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think the main headings were fairly easily split, but Anne will be able to tell you. Anne did say that we are ... there is still some detail to be sorted. So if, Anne, you might be able to explain to us. But the main headings of doing that were fairly straightforward.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So the main chunks which were the Children's Social Care Services, the Youth Service section and C.A.M.H.S. and well-being moved entirely as a chunk unimpeded into this head of expenditure. The bit that proved difficult were all the central services, so business support-type services. We were not going to do it and then we were, and I was actually on holiday when it happened. So having had a chance to look at it since then, we will need to make some adjustment because otherwise we have got ... essentially Keith's functions, just to make it clear, have been supporting both sides and getting a first bit of that based on activity will need some adjustment. But it still has essentially one manager delivering services to 2 different points of expenditure. I do not think we have quite got that right.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. Because we asked the same question of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning when we saw him last week, he said that the interaction of C.A.M.H.S. in schools was one of the main areas of crossover, and we were just wondering whether that has had any impact for C.A.M.H.S.

The Minister for Children and Families:

It should not do because that would stay with us. From a budget point of view that is still ours.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think the Minister was outlining that that is probably one of the more prominent operational interfaces that happens. We are keen and we have continued to work as one department and we think it is really important that the services continue to have interface across the professional disciplines and across the services. They are a family of services. But there is now distinct recognition that the budget requirement sits within the Minister's portfolio. Operationally, we are purposefully trying to make sure we do not lose integration.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

If, for an example, a school identified the need for speech and language therapy ... Keith's smiling at me already. Speech and language therapy, for example. That is a service that is provided by C.A.M.H.S.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No, it has been provided by H.C.S. (Health and Community Services) actually.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So that is even more complicated then. If I expanded the question to say, well, if the school identified that they needed a speech and language function and C.A.M.H.S. also identified that they needed a speech and language function, how is that reflected in your C.A.M.H.S. budget? You then have to go to Health, do you?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We commissioned the service from H.C.S. and we have provisioned directly through H.C.S. for speech language therapy.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So C.Y.P.E.S. would commission from H.C.S. and then that would be done. So that is part of your integrated thing, so you would expect C.A.M.H.S. and school to be agreeing ...

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... over that and then you would commission. So where does the commissioning budget sit?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So that will sit in the central, it is one of the central enabling ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Spanning the 2?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

... enabling functions within the commissioning team which spans the 2, which then can be, I suppose, independent in that sense from the 2 services but working on behalf of them.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

It is not straightforward, is it?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think we might probably return to this next year and give you some more examples of how it is working.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

The Office of the Chief Officer of C.Y.P.E.S - so that that would be you - sits across Children and Families and Education. Can you give us some examples? You have got quite a big budget there; £17.6 million expenditure budget for 2025. Could you just give us some examples of what work is undertaken by part of the service for the Children and Families line?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I can. My understanding is that our growth also will be placed within the central part of the budget and then allocated out to the Education Department; the C.S.P. growth that is. But the general functions will be governance, capital planning and support, the programme management team and support team, transformation and innovation team. Our informatics service is spread across the 2. Our communication service, because that is devolved to us in C.Y.P.E.S., sits within the chief office portfolio and the engagement and participation directorate, the libraries, Skills Jersey. Am I missing something, Keith?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So Skills Jersey sits within that as well and then across the 2?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It sits within it, yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, hence the big budget.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. From what we can see, the budget for Children's Social Care and Safeguarding is the only part of the budget that is expected to increase between 2025 and 2028; I think from £23 million up to £27.2 million. Can you just tell us some more about what that increased revenue expenditure is going to be required to do?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So that essentially is we start ... we started the previous year's growth in the Office of the Chief Officer and then as we move forward and the schemes become mobilised, we hand it out to the directorate where it is happening. Of course, when we split the directorate, we have taken it out of the central piece and put it into Children and Families. It is now sort of owned as a pot and it is being deployed via the reform programme.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. In the hearing on Monday, Minister, you advised us that there were vacancies across Children's Social Care that were being filled by agency staff. I was very interested to hear that obviously the 2023 injection of cash for the recruitment of retention has effectively run out and reduced to £400,000. Can you be precise about the additional cost to the service of having to put interims or temps into permanent vacancies?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It depends on the post but on average one agency post costs between 1.3 and 1.5 times as much as one ordinary paid officer. The key driver here is how many permanent people we have got versus

how many agency. That is the piece that we have been trying to improve with that, with the work that was done upfront on that.

Director, Children's Services:

If I can add, I think the reduction that you are seeing in the social work establishment is about a piece of work that was agreed some years ago to try to improve recruitment and retention. So it was about the retention packet for work package for workers as an injection of a piece of transformation work to see if they could increase permanence across the workforce. That has had an impact because obviously there has been a reduction in the use of agency staff and an increase in permanent across the whole system. That is not where we want to be yet. So that will need to be reviewed.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is there is anything in the Budget for 2025 that is accounting for that 1.5 times, what it is going to cost on top of permanent staff? Is it reflected in here in the Budget anywhere?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It is reflected in the plan against the total budget, including the growth monies that I mentioned. So as Donna progresses and achieves more people on permanent, that then releases the money back to do something else with. But I think you would say that it would be uncommon ever to lose all agency.

Director, Children's Services:

It is critical.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

A minimum of 20 per cent, probably 30 per cent.

Director, Children's Services:

Probably 30 per cent on-Island. But we have not done that work yet. So we have got a piece of work ... we have done the front end of the reform programme. We have rebuilt the budget, what we think the service could cost to run properly. So that from 2025 we are clear about what we think as best as we can being a demand-led service. Then part of the next piece of work we need to do is around the whole of the workforce about to review what has been done, come back round, look at it again and understand how ... what we think the modelling and the mapping should look like to get the figures ... what we think it would look like. It will never have no agency staff in social work. It is just all across the U.K. (United Kingdom) and thinking that we are a small island, it adds another layer of complexity that makes it a bit more challenging to this group.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Can I just ask, what would be a good figure, do you think?

Director, Children's Services:

I think probably, without doing the modelling, accepting that that has not been done and this is a bit of a guess, probably about 30 per cent. In the U.K. you are sitting about 20 per cent. I guess what you think is we would be thinking ... today, I think we are about 40 per cent or a little bit over that, you would be thinking that over time you want to be chipping away and bringing that down all the time through all of the different things you have got, whether it is your on-Island degree or ... all of those things together should help to add a reduction in agency and an increase in perm. But you will probably get to a point where ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So your target is really 30 per cent?

Director, Children's Services:

In the back of my head, but we have not done the modelling yet. So we do need to do that to be accurate.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Additionally, there is a piece of work to have a look at buying that more smartly. So we would be hoping to improve the cost in this period.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you. Presumably there are other opportunities for working with the Minister for Housing about key worker accommodation and the like and availability of rents and of appropriate accommodation and the like with the slack that we have got in the system. Is that work in hand, Minister?

The Minister for Children and Families:

We have done ...

Director, Children's Services:

That has been part of the reform work that was done about the offer about accommodation and the system that you have got about how you support onboarding and bringing staff in. That is all part of

the offer. I think we would want to review that. We want to refresh the whole of the recruitment and retention strategy. It is what you would do naturally. I think that work does need to be done as the refresh of the reform. It is just we have started at the front end of the loving homes because it is probably the biggest thing to really get the time because it will take a lot of years. So we have been working our way through the system.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

There is no money in the 2025 Budget to review and refresh the recruitment and retention strategy?

Director, Children's Services:

There will be money to do the ... we will do the review, absolutely. The issue that ... there is a reduction in the offer that there is to social workers as part of coming on-Island. You pay a retention fee to that. That offer is not built in the future modelling.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

Director, Children's Services:

That is just not in there, so that is why it looks like less money because that offer is not built in. We need to review that. We might say actually we do need it or we need something different and then we will need to build that into the budget. But the strategy will get done as part of the reform programme as a natural course.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Can you give us an example of some of the services that are funded under the Integrated Services and Commissioning Service line, because again that budget is due to decrease 2025 to 2028 from £10.5 million to £10.4 million?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So this would be C.A.M.H.S., Youth Service, Early Help services.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Does it include grant funding the decrease as well?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No, that would sit within the Commissioning Department. So the Integrated Services budget will reflect the directorates of Early Help.

[15:30]

It will be part of what was the I.I.Y.S. (Intensive Integrated Youth Service) and I believe that C.A.M.H.S. still remains under the portfolio heading. It is those 3 main functions,

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

When I fiddle with this I might make the names ... take the opportunity to make it more obvious.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Will the I.I.Y.S. continue or will that ...?

Director, Children's Services:

The first strand of the improvement programme is the supporting families. That is about developing a multidisciplinary service across the whole of Children's. The I.I.Y.S. has moved into there. It is going to look different because the Education part will stick with the school.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But the function will still remain.

Director, Children's Services:

The education part of children's education will sit with the Education system. All of the other stuff, we want to build that team bigger.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So the budget will move from the Education into Children's.

Director, Children's Services:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But bits of it will be split.

Director, Children's Services:

Yes.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, the budget will remain within the M.C.F. (Minister for Children and Families) portfolio.

Director, Children's Services:

The I.I.Y.S has moved in and that will become more of a bigger move to disciplinary service.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

We can also see that the budget for young people service line is due to slightly decrease by about £44,000 between 2025 and 2028. Can you just let us know what that service line is and why there is a small decrease?

Director, Children's Services:

This is linked to the savings target.

The Minister for Children and Families:

That will be the savings, yes.

Director, Children's Services:

It is a portion of it.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is that going to have an impact on the Youth Service and the Youth Service projects?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I would hope not. It is a relatively small amount so I would not have thought that will have an impact.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Because I think the Government has committed future capital, has it not, expenditure to particularly the youth project in St. Helier?

The Minister for Children and Families:

The new youth project, yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is the squeeze in that budget line going to have an impact on how that youth project is funded?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So it is all rolled into that one.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

The development to build the programme will be supported from the Office of the Chief Officer. Programme managers will be provided from that part, that will not come out of Youth Service budget.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

There will be sufficient Youth Service ...

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Absolutely.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... staff to be able to deliver the services from within it?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. Again, reviewing your service level analysis projected to be a reduction in 19 full-time equivalents across Children and Families over the next 2 years. Can you just tell us where it is likely those F.T.E. (full-time equivalent) reductions are going to be made?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Again as part of the savings target and it is a proportion of the senior roles savings target that you see throughout the Government Plan savings targets.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, so it will not be coming from the bottom, it will be coming from ...

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

So above grade 11 and primarily back office function and achieving savings through automation and not recruiting into roles. There is something of a recruitment freeze going on and clearing out older non-front line service recruitment that was still in the system.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, so that is how that will be reflected in the decrease. So we are not actually having any redundancies in front line staff, it will be done through vacancy management, will it?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Exactly. Primarily vacancy management.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Talking about savings, I know you have mentioned it already, but I will ask the question anyway. You have got proposed savings of 537 in 2025, 482 in 2026; are there any other areas, other than that you have already mentioned, to meet your savings targets where you will be focusing those?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, there is all the efficiencies work.

Director, Children's Services:

We have been doing a lot of work. As part of the whole reform and the review we have been trying to look much more closely at decision making, sign off all of those things to make those things work well. That will help to make sure the system runs smoothly, make sure we review our contracts and our commissioning, our grant, all of those things, doing them well. I think we will deliver a more effective service over time. It is the same as running our residential estate, doing that well. I think we know that that will deliver over time a more cost-effective service and a better quality one.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

In terms of impact on Children's Services, actually it is almost trying to do better with less.

Director, Children's Services:

I think we should be able to do that as well from the work we have done.

The Minister for Children and Families:

We should be able to do that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

In the fullest of time, once your work comes through.

Director, Children's Services:

For a while you will have ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

By Christmas.

Director, Children's Services:

No, not by Christmas. In a couple of years you will start to really see that. If you do improvement well then later on upstream it will start to do things.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Again that is the impact on Children's Service. What impact will there be on C.A.M.H.S. from those savings targets?

Director, Children's Services:

Their target is small, is it not?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We have not worked through those plans yet, but again, it is about protecting the front lines, as we have said before, and looking at the enabling functions that support those front line services.

Director, Children's Services:

Managing vacancies well, I think that does make a difference. You do not have to do everything tomorrow. Sometimes we can take a little bit more time to recruit and that obviously makes a difference to the budget overall.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you very much.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Minister, I am going to ask a few questions about C.Y.P.E.S. estates and the budget of it. So the Budget includes wording that indicates plans for a St. Helier Youth Centre for the Ann Street Brewery site. What can you tell us about that particular project?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I can talk to that

The Minister for Children and Families:

That is your area.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Just to recap really, the youth centre will be a youth and community centre and it will also be a home for the Youth Enquiry Service, which is the front line advice service for young people. So monies have been set aside in the 2025 Budget and obviously through the C.S.P. it is proposed. There is a sum of money. Negotiations are still ongoing, of course, and some of that is commercially

sensitive. But the plan is to have a site on the Ann Street Brewery site, which will cover both of those functions for young people. It will include an inside hall, will include a kick pitch, which is on the roof, and the important thing that we are doing at the moment is engaging with the neighbours because although there is a lot of development going on in that area, there are also lots of existing households in this area. We want to make sure that while it is a great facility for young people, other people in the area are not adversely affected. We are engaging with neighbours to see how we can make it as least disruptive to their lives as possible, bearing in mind that some people living in that area there might be a fantastic new facility right on their doorstep. We have already had some pre-planning advice and one of them is to decrease the lighting on the kick pitch outside so that there is no light pollution into people's homes. There are some sensible measures that we can take to reduce noise and also dispersal at the end of the session to make sure that not everyone comes rushing out at the same time. They get dispersed through safe pathways, which is of least disruption to neighbours. To answer your question, the monies are allocated in the Budget and will be used for that purpose.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you. So on that note, in terms of finances, does the Government own the present site or would you be considering renting it or, say, the purchase?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

The whole purchase will be built on ... the developer develops the site for us, furnishes it and then hands it over to us for that sum of money.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Are you saying the site will belong to the developer and the developer will ...?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Up until the point where it is ready and then we will be the owner of that site, lock, stock and barrel.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It is not going to be like a 99-year lease then; it is going to be in States ownership?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

No, it is going to come across to us. That was the benefit of doing it because from an insurance point of view, the developer owns it up until it is ready to hand over. They ensure if anything goes wrong, it is down to them. Then on day one it is in our estate and it comes under our insurance.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

It sounds like quite a large development. Has this been fitting with the current development of the whole area?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Is it going to work in tangent with it?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

It is a really important part of that whole development because there are lots of flats being built in that area. It is going to be quite densely populated. Lots of them will be young people with families and naturally those young people will need somewhere to enjoy. So the plans that we have got for it is ... it is going to be the best youth facility that we have got in Jersey. There is no doubt about that. I have visited Grand Vaux over the weekend and actually that is a hidden gem in the south. But this is going to surpass that. There will be hopefully a climbing wall inside, which will be a real stretch and will really test young people to get to the top of that. Not just young people, of course.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

That sounds exciting.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Like I say, there is an indoor hall so that whatever the weather, young people can do sports activities inside. So lots of really good activities.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. In that line, why was the facility at Le Squez reprofiled to allow this new youth facility in St. Helier to take place?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Why was it reprofiled? What we did is we looked at a number of sites across town. It is really important that we had a facility in the town area. But of all the sites that we looked at, this was the one that ticked all of the boxes in terms of accessibility for young people, in terms of it coming straight into our ownership. Actually, when you look at the plans that we have got for it, it is quite a quirky building and for young people that is exciting in itself. So we are going to keep lots of the original features and you would not have had that in a bland hall. It is not going to be that. It really is going to be something special.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

The walls are 4-foot thick as well, are they not?.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, exactly.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Nice and soundproof.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

They are soundproof and there are some fantastic features. It is not a downside, but the slight obstacle is it is a listed building. There are some restrictions on what we can do. But, like I say, in a lot of ways that will make it even more special because it will bring that old lovely building back to life.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Can I just ask? Maybe I missed this, but did you mention the timescale?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

The plan is to have it in place by early to mid-2028.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

And maybe sooner.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Who knows? It would be lovely if it came on stream sooner.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

If we could go back to the Le Squez project because that had been put in place before this new town development take place. That is where I really am trying to focus because Le Squez also was supposed to be a community hub and was going to interlink quite a lot of other youth communities and bring the youth together. That has kind of been put backwards in a way. If I was to carry on and ask you a bit further on that, has any consultation been undertaken to make this particular decision between the 2 projects?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

The important thing about the Le Squez project is while that is another built-up area, there is already an existing offer and so the monies that were allocated to that project were just to make some slight

modernisation improvements. The project which is in Le Squez will still continue and the work that was planned will now commence in 2028. All that has happened is we have nudged it forward a couple of years to allow us to focus on the town development. It does not mean that the Le Squez project will not get exactly what it needs. It is certainly not unsafe or anything like that at the moment. It just needs some little modernisation.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So it has not been shelved, it is just slightly delayed. But has there been any consultation taking place for that delay?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

There has not other than the fact that we had to redirect those monies in order to make the town project ... to kick it off basically.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think, slightly putting it in perspective, back in 2019 when the St. Helier youth project was first suggested, there was budget allocated to it, which then got moved to another project in a very similar way..

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

In the same way.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I wonder if I could just quickly quote some of your own figures for St. Helier. Nearly 3,000 children aged 9 to 16 living in St. Helier, with more than 70 per cent of the homes being flats and there is no youth centre.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Exactly. And that is why it really is so important.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think it would just be worth saying, Deputy, in your question in terms of consultation, obviously officers from the Youth Service themselves have given a steer here in terms of priority. I think that then goes to the chair's read out of the lack of provision in St. Helier. Of course, Le Squez does need modernisation and it is, as you framed it, really important for the community. It is important for the school and the services that go in there. Unfortunately, there will be a delay for that or a movement back in the plan, but then that just reflects the prioritisation and the deliverability of the whole capital programme.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So it just gives the panel a better understanding how these prioritisations took place.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Resources can be dedicated into the project so that we can deliver those projects.

[15:45]

The Minister for Children and Families:

It was when I delegated new services to Malcolm and we had a discussion in view of the large number of young people who had no facilities. It was your number one priority to go back because this had been suggested as a potential site before. So we went back to visit it because the other site that everybody was keen on was never going to become available. Now we did not just look at this. We looked at a number of the others, and some are a far higher cost, so this was in exactly the right location where the concentration of the flats exist so it could not have been in a better location.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So, in your view, the prioritisation made sense because it was an exceptional site to get hold of.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, it made absolute sense because there is no St. Helier Youth Centre. When you think there were around 3 or 4 a couple of decades ago and one by one, they have closed.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Just gone.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

The youth workers do great work in St. Helier. It is just there is not a centre.

The Minister for Children and Families:

There is not a centre, no.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

If I may move on. We are going to talk about Greenfields a little bit. Minister, on Monday, you advised that there would be a future revamp to the Greenfields site. Please could you confirm how that will be funded and if it forms part of this proposed Budget?

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is part of our plan looking at the whole estate and sustainability. I do not think there is specifically anything for Greenfields in this Government Plan. However, we still have to sign off on that plan during probably 2025. They certainly will be in the next Government Plan.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

For 2025.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, and we have a fairly clear vision of what we want to do.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Could you give us a bit of an insight? What would you be doing in 2025?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, I think the overall vision is for, let us say, a much more caring body in that you have secure orders and, at the moment, you have very little else and that is not a situation you should be in. There are numerous other alternatives around the world and there was a fair bit of work done some time ago of those. What we have to be careful of is not to just adopt something from somewhere else. It has to be something that you tailor for the Island's needs. You need to look at having things that are alternatives to secure so that is non-secure and, of that, that will involve therapy and also support for people. So it is not just buildings. It is a new outlook on how you would deal with young people.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Sorry, do you want to come in?

Director, Children's Services:

I was just going to add, I think what we see that site as being is more of a whole site. It is not just about Greenfields in itself. What we are talking about is it becoming much more of a specialist site where children's needs can be met in a broader way. So you have secure because you will always need secure with some children, but to be able to think of that being able to stretch more so that, as children's needs step down, they have another space that they can go to to step out of places like Greenfields. The care team with the staff team can work across those homes in a more joined up way with the C.A.M.H.S. capacity in there as well, so we have C.A.M.H.S. and the specialist service all wrapped around a group of children who might have quite high level needs.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

In terms of access, it sounds amazing.

Director, Children's Services:

Yes, and maybe some thinking about remand beds because they are being built into all of that, yes.

The Minister for Children and Families:

That is non-secure remand because, at the moment, this is another issue of course. If someone does not get bail and they are remanded when they are arrested, the only place to take them is Greenfields and that is not really right.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Have you considered bail fostering at all?

The Minister for Children and Families:

In effect, that is how this operates, yes.

Director, Children's Services:

Yes, we are thinking that maybe one of the properties we may use differently in a sort of emergency bed way, but that may involve fostering so we have a little bit of creative thinking to do I think in that space.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So the answer was yes, by the way.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, so obviously, quite a lot of work in progress. What we would like to do as a panel is maybe possibly to have a look at the plans. Do you have any idea in terms of timescale when those plans will be available to be shared?

Director, Children's Services:

So the plan for the whole of the loving home, so the residential plan is ready almost. What we have not concluded yet is what that specialist site would look like. We have work to do around Greenfields and the capacity it offers. It will need some legal changes so it is quite a big piece of work.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think it also ties into the youth justice strategy as well because the 2 must complement each other.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, we look forward to getting some sort of look into the plans. That will be really exciting. Thank you. Again, Minister, on Monday, you spoke about the future ambition to provide non-secure accommodation to young people so would that be part of the development of Greenfields?

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is part of this plan, yes, because there are a number of buildings on that site. I think the Greenfields one is probably the most difficult because the trouble is its costs and everything. Ideally, a demolition and rebuild would make life a lot easier. I am not sure that is something that we can do but what we can do is redevelop the inside of it so that it is a much better building. We visited somewhere in the U.K. where it was slightly different but it was called a secure school and it has not opened yet. It is open now, is it? Strangely enough, when I was in Kent, they were advertising for staff but we visited it about a month before and they had taken in effect what ... was it a prison building?

Director, Children's Services:

A secure training centre so, yes, a prison for children.

The Minister for Children and Families:

They redeveloped it in a way that made it a lot more pleasant. We did find one thing which was that - and we still have to follow this up - the doors, we have been told, cannot be changed at Greenfields. They had undertaken those changes within these units with exactly the same doors so we will have to try and find the firm that was able to do that.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Practical changes to the build.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, so no more prison doors. They can change them. We have the doors but we have been told that, physically, they could not change them, but we have seen it done.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So, as well as the doors, Minister, there will be the changes made if that needs to take place, if practical.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think there would be a lot of changes we would want to make. Let us try and complete the plan and then I am happy to update you then.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, that is fine. I was just going to finish that question and ask if there is any provision to change that in your budget to allow for those practical changes for this Budget.

The Minister for Children and Families:

That starts next year really.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

For next year.

Director, Children's Services:

That will need new capital funding, but there is obviously money for the residential stake that went into the Budget which is about maintaining it and doing things we need to.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So there is a budget for that.

Director, Children's Services:

That is always in the budget, yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, that is great. Thank you.

Director, Children's Services:

The actual significant changes in build would need new capital.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I go back to the unit in the Isle of Man, which I think is 2 years older, but it is a lot more of a homely atmosphere than Greenfields.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

It sounds ideal. I suppose that is all you would like to have in Jersey.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, and it is 2 years older.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you for that. So we also note there is a figure of £750,000 in the Budget for therapeutic children's homes for 2025 but nothing for the following years after that.

The Minister for Children and Families:

That is the budget for ... is that not ...

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, I can answer this.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Is that Khartoum?

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, that is for Khartoum.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Sorry, I should not have named it.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It is associated with one of our projects to transform property that we own into a 16-plus provision.

Director, Children's Services:

Yes, 16 to 19, yes.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

A 16 to 19 provision and that is the work that is going to be required in 2025 so we are doing a lot of planning work on it at the moment.

The Minister for Children and Families:

It is one of those existing States government buildings that we have talked about that has been empty for years.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

How many units of accommodation did you say?

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Is it 4 plus one?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Plus the residential manager, yes.

Director, Children's Services:

Plus a little flat we are hoping for.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So like a caretaker.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes. Residential manager, yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

A manager.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It might be something that the panel would like to visit at some point maybe because you will really get a sense I think with the loving homes global strategy coming together.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I think work starts in February, is it?

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, absolutely, and we can share the plans, if that is a problem if you would like to see those as well, but that is why it is one year because the redevelopment will be done. It will be finished.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Done. It should be finished within the year, yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. So my last question for now is, at the hearing on Monday you advised that a number of vacant properties already owned by the government had been identified for use as children's homes in the future.

The Minister for Children and Families:

This is one of them.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

This is one of them.

The Minister for Children and Families:

There is another one that we are trying to obtain. Well, it is 4 cottages joined together and now in a state of derelict with scaffolding around one of them, but they would make excellent units. If you used 2 cottages for each, you would have homes for 3 children and residential manager on top, so they are in our portfolio, so we want them allocated to us. I have spoken to the Chief Minister a week ago about this to try and get things moving and then we have to go into preplanning to see what we would be allowed to do, but they would be ideal.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Are they in town?

The Minister for Children and Families:

They are just outside of town.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So would you say the budget has already been planned for that for 2025?

Director, Children's Services:

So that is part of the modelling work we have been doing, is trying to understand about all of the options and to look at the properties that we think there are. So there will not be sufficient money in the budget to do all of the capital work and that is what we need to really pin down a bit more is to get the places. Some of the remodelling we have done has enabled us to look at freeing up some money and to use it differently so that will help to reduce the overall costs.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Have you thought of any particular areas where you would be freeing up the money?

Director, Children's Services:

Only by moving our residential plan. We obviously have children in homes. Some homes are going to close that we do not have control of. As we do that work and we close homes, obviously if they are not open we will not be running them the same way, so that will reduce some of our costs. We just need to work our way through that plan over those next 3 years, and that is what we are doing, is working out what closes and what opens and to look at the whole picture. Then we will understand fully what is the capital money we need so that, with the Greenfield site, we need to do the work to say: "How would we run that? What staff do we need? What will it look like? What do we need to change?"

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

The time it will take as well.

Director, Children's Services:

So then we can build the budget accordingly so we are a little bit early on.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Although we have to give the money back, we have saved £3.4 million buying that going forward with the original therapeutic home and buying another property.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You say you have to give the money back.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, we did give it back.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Where did it go?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Back to the capital programme.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It goes back into the capital programme. It gets recycled into the capital programme and then the allocation is made up, yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Constable, your turn.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you. Minister, Infrastructure has confirmed in a letter to the E.H.I. (Environment, Housing and Infrastructure) Scrutiny Panel that the workstream for field developments and play space has been rescoped and cancelled. Please could he tell us why Government has agreed to that considering this Government declared it would like to put children first?

[16:00]

The Minister for Children and Families:

Is that the play strategy? That is interesting because we were looking at this in the last week. I think the strategy, as in a play strategy, has been cancelled, but there is a joint sort of requirement across a number of Ministries to provide play space and we want to put that in our plan. You are going to give me the full name of the plan.

Director, Children's Services:

The improvement plan.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, so what we think we will do is we will put this play within our own plan to be delivered by various departments, and I see that is how we will drive it forward. There is still a requirement for the developers, particularly in the new development, to provide play areas. So I think I mentioned last time the one out at St. Peter. We were with the school in the last month discussing what the children would like in the play area and we will go out to the youth club so there is a requirement there. I think it is just a case of managing it.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

But in the Government Plan, there are monies allocated for outdoor play spaces for children so there is the Le Rocquier sports field, there is First Tower field and there is Grainville School field. Those are going to be delivered in 2028.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That is not play so much, is it?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Well, it is outdoor play spaces. It is improving some outdoor play spaces.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Just on that, we would like to see the Le Rocquier facilities supported so we are going to continue the feasibility work there and then work with our colleagues in Treasury to see if that can be funded within the lifetime of the programme because the Deputy is absolutely right. The funding within the Government Plan allowing for development in play shows up in 2028. There were initial discussions around First Tower field, which we have spoken about I think here as well, which does a big element of play associated with it as well as providing outside space for the school. However, that is quite complicated. It is in our ownership, so we would have to work through whether that is going to be achievable or not but, again, this is around reprofiling the capital plan and prioritisation. That is why there has been money left in the plan but there are obviously a few years leading up to where we

do all the feasibility work to see what we can do in 2028. It is just worth also noting that this year a new play area for St. John's School has been completed as part of that programme.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What a surprise.

Director, Children's Services:

I am just going to correct as well, but I think out of the Children's Improvement Plan, it is the Children and Young People's Plan.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Children and Young People's Plan, yes.

Director, Children's Services:

Sorry, so my mistake.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I cannot remember all the names. Put it this way, we have certainly not given up on delivering play areas even if the strategy is no longer there.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What involvement did you have with the decision to cancel this programme, Minister? Well, the play space has been rescope and cancelled.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So the projects that we have spoken about really sit with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning because they are associated with schools in terms of the discussions around the Government Plan. Ministers were apprised of options through different workshops and to the Council of Ministers. The prioritisation for the plan was agreed.

The Minister for Children and Families:

But do not worry because that was the Minister for Infrastructure, was it, because the play strategy I believe originally sat with sport?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

My understanding is that it is between 3 different departments.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, it should be. I am also aware we had sort of ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

But then it would need someone to lead on it. Are you saying that is Education?

The Minister for Children and Families:

No.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think if you are making reference to the capital amount in the line, that was associated with developments for school fields absolutely. It may have been interpreted as wider play areas across the Island. They were specifically for upgrading for fields. We have gone through a programme within schools around 3G pitches. I have mentioned the St. John's pitch and there have been plans we mentioned in Grainville and Le Rocquier and First Tower the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has. This question is for the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning in terms of for these pitches but it is not just general play spaces. That is a misinterpretation.

The Minister for Children and Families:

But for the more general play spaces, we intend to put it in the ... tell me the name of the plan. I keep on forgetting.

Director, Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

It is the Children and Young People's Plan.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Children and Young People's Plan. So we are going to incorporate it into that so that it is not lost and we will expect the other departments to play their part in delivering those.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You have consulted about the decision with regards to your responsibility for co-ordinating policies and actions across government which improves the well-being of children. Is that a statement that you believe in?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So how was the balance of these projects decided on with regard to play space? How was the balance between Ministries decided on and was there a process that they went through? It is just that it might be worth announcing publicly now at this Scrutiny Panel that there is a play space in Grouville that is going to be closed down next year because the Government is no longer going to fund it.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, but I have not been consulted on that.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Interesting. I just thought I would like to make that public.

The Minister for Children and Families:

I only know because you have told me.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Intriguing that that has not been communicated across to the Minister for Children and Families.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So if you want to formally write to me and tell me about it, then I will ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am unable to do that at the moment because we do not own it but what I will do is certainly provide it.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, when you can, I will try and take that forward and find ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

I thought it would be worth making that public because it is going to be quite a big topic in the future.

The Minister for Children and Families:

So do let me know.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Good.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, I know now but I need you to raise it formally.

The Connétable of Grouville:

How were the voice and recommendations of the Youth Parliament considered because one of their biggest came for the right to play in the Youth Parliament, and we were very keen to see that enacted, but how were voice and recommendations of the Youth Parliament considered?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, I think the fact that, where the department have included it in our plan, shows our commitment to delivering that. I can see you smile but we will take a line to get play areas developed, yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I hope so.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

There was also feedback through the Director of Engagement and Participation so from the school council they gave specific feedback about play and that is why the Minister has made sure that, for this portfolio, we influence the strategy and we influence the future development through the Children Young People's Plan. But that will span across the Minister for Children and Families' portfolio for sport fields and then the Minister for Infrastructure for intentions around the public realm. So we have an influencing factor but the budget and the capital is unlikely to come into this Minister's portfolio.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But earlier, Minister, you said that the play strategy had been cancelled.

The Minister for Children and Families:

No, well, you said it has been cancelled.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No, I actually ... that is in the question plan.

The Minister for Children and Families:

As far as I am concerned, it is live in the fact that we have decided to put into our plan and, along with those 2 other Ministries, ensure that it is developed.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So has the play strategy been published?

The Minister for Children and Families:

No.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So will publication of the play strategy then come as a part of your update for the Children and Young People's Plan?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, because we have a document which sort of predates this, does it not, in that we have a play policy that we put together? So we will certainly use that document.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Minister, no Children's Right Impact Assessment is required for the proposed Budget proposition. However, can you confirm if your advice was sought on any particular matters as part of the Budget drafting process?

The Minister for Children and Families:

I certainly know that the vast majority of areas are going to produce a C.R.I.A. (Children's Right Impact Assessment) in their areas of the Budget. I think that is pretty much every Ministry. I think all the Ministries are going to produce C.R.I.A.s so I have a list of those that are due to be delivered so, in that, have I been made aware? Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is the answer to that. Do you think the Government could have done any more to consider the impact to the proposed Budget on children?

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I think we have looked at every area of the Budget that is going to likely have a direct affect on children and produce the C.R.I.A. for those individual proposals.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We note that alcohol and fuel duty is due to be frozen as part of this Budget to help Islanders with the cost of living, but can you confirm what discussions were had by the Council of Ministers to assess the impact or benefits that will have to families?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Well, fuel is a relatively easy one. The cost of fuel affects us all whether we drive, whether goods are being delivered or whatever so, yes, obviously freezing that is of benefit to households. When it comes to alcohol, I think that is a slightly different consideration. Clearly, I would have thought that the department involved has looked at the effect on families but was I consulted? No.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Okay, that is honest enough. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so I know we had a brief discussion a moment ago about Le Rocquier and other sports facilities and this question does mention them. Regarding the business justification case for C.Y.P.E.S. feasibility projects, which includes the new Mont à l'Abbé Secondary School, the new north of St. Helier School, the new Le Squez Youth Centre, upgrades to St. Aubin's Fort, upgrades to Le Rocquier and Grainville sports facility, so including all those things, the conclusion of this business justification is: "Do minimum is the best option" and this was mainly because it fits in with budget resource. So our concern is that policy appears to be based on short-term revenue constraints and does this not cost the Island more long term?

The Minister for Children and Families:

The problem is we do not want to go into a deficit situation as a department and you have to prioritise projects. I look at St. Aubin's Fort. There are some very good existing facilities. I do not think we will allow those to deteriorate but I do not think, at this point, we can do anything additional out there. I do not know if anybody has any further ...

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

There simply is not the capacity to be able to deal with the ambition.

The Minister for Children and Families:

No.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We would not be able to meet all of the ambition set even if revenue was available and there are major projects announced within the plan which are well-versed and, prominently, the hospital. It would be incredibly difficult to achieve all of this ambition within the timeline and so the projects have been prioritised based on affordability and deliverability.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, I understand that but that does mean that it is going to cost more long term if things are not done now and kept in good condition.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Well, our aim is to try and keep them in as good condition as we can, but we are not in a position of complete replace at this moment.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so my last question, Minister, to end the hearing: please can you tell us the top 3 things that you hope this Budget will achieve for your portfolio of children and families?

The Minister for Children and Families:

Right, okay, the new town youth centre. I am trying to think. Now you have caught me.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

Yes, better outcomes for children.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Yes.

Assistant Minister for Children and Families:

I know play spaces has been spoken about, but in the Children and Young People's Plan, access to be able to play safely is a big priority

[16:15]

The Minister for Children and Families:

At the end of the day, the overall outcome is the best outcome for all our children. That is what we are aiming for so, as an overall, that would be number one and all the other things sits beneath it.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. All right?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Okay.

The Minister for Children and Families:

Thank you very much.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you very much, everyone. Thank you.

[16:15]